a greater role in providing information and advice to assist in identifying appropriate projects for areas of refugee return.

7.4 In line with this new orientation, SOP was approached by GTZ to identify potential project sites for the expansion of their activities to cross-border rehabilitation programmes. GTZ planned to fund and implement a housing rehabilitation project utilizing alternative roofing construction based on prior experience in refugee camps which indicates acceptance of techniques and materials. Their target is to construct 250-300 houses during first year and a half. UNHCR recommended consideration of Khogiani district due to its accessibility, its status as the district of highest priority in terms of estimated numbers of refugees in Pakistan, and indications of increased momentum in repatriation movements over past year. In a consortium approach to provide integrated programming for the community, IRC was contacted for a possible sanitation project to complement GTZ housing construction. After consultation and coordination with UNDP, joint UN/GTZ/IRC assessment missions were undertaken to potential project sites.

7.5 A similar consortium approach is being taken by UNDP and ACBAR to coordinate assistance for Khost (Paktia). UNHCR repatriation staff are participating in this effort to increase NGO awareness and monitoring of repatriation trends to the area.

PLAN OF ACTION FOR 1992

1. Expectations and Possible Scenarios for 1992

1.1 Despite uncertain conditions in Afghanistan, the level of return movements has been increasing each year since the signing of the Geneva Accords. Encashments from NWFP have reflected this increase with 8,789 during 1990 (6 months), and 13,481 during 1991. The ability of UNHCR to monitor and document the return has also been enhanced to better identify the destination of returnees. The movement has not been general, but rather specific groups returning to specific localities. It has been a gradual process of shifting the family center-of-gravity increasingly toward a final return. Recognizing that this process has now been increasingly underway for over two years, it is reasonable to assume that return will continue and modestly accelerate during 1992.

1.2 Security in the area of origin remains the principal factor in any decision to return. Low levels of return to Logar and western Paktia during 1991 can be directly attributed to the continued conflict; movements to Kunar dramatically declined during the final half of the year due to inter-party strife. Nevertheless, there has been a steady return to the northern provinces of Baghlan and Kunduz, as well as to specific districts in Nangarhar. It is reasonable to assume that return will continue and even accelerate to areas away from major highways, strategic locations and the environs of Kabul. It is however possible that with the increased disintegration of central control over the parties and the commanders, inter-party, ethnic and tribal conflicts could become the major factor preventing the establishment of secure conditions for repatriation.

1.3 The reduction in food assistance to refugees in the camps in the most often stated reason for return at encashment locations. After an initial reduction by 20% of the rations on a per person basis, the reduced distribution in the camps created an overall reduction of 47% from previous years. There are no plans at present to further reduce the assistance, although prolonged shortages would further aggravate the situation and possibly create a greater disparity between encashment and return. Reduced assistance is more likely to stimulate increased encashment rather than repatriation.

1.4 It remains to be seen what effect the rapidly changing conditions throughout the world will have on Afghanistan. The resolution of regional conflicts has shifted world attention away from the civil war which continues to be waged for control of Kabul. The desire to obtain access to the markets of the central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union could put increased pressure on all parties to reach a negotiated settlement. Although both sides of the conflict have sufficient weapons to continue fighting after the cessations of arms shipments, a cutoff of airplane fuel to Kabul could seriously weaken the government's ability to defend and reinforce provincial centres. Further shortages of food supplies and rapid inflation could sharply undercut the government's authority in Kabul and among the military. The outlook at the end of 1991 is perhaps cloudier and more

unpredictable than at any time in the recent past.

1.5 Due to the uncertain situation, UNHCR Pakistan is updating its contingency plans for responding to large scale movements to Afghanistan. Massive return, however, is not expected; rather it is anticipated that conditions would remain unstable and return would be prolonged over a minimum period of two years. Return could nevertheless increase suddenly and dramatically which would require an increased response and presence of UNHCR. An evaluation and re-examination of current assistance programmes operated from Pakistan and Afghanistan is timely and would be flexible to respond to a variety of situations.

2. Assisted Returns

SOP will continue to pursue opportunities to assist movements with payment of transportation costs similar to the return of 30 families to Baghlan during 1991. Contingent upon available funds, UNHCR will pay an agreed portion of the transport costs from Pakistan to Kabul to the transporter on arrival in Kabul. Criteria for eligibility will be groups of more than 20 families returning to distant locations (Baghlan and Kunduz) who are willing to transit through the Peace House programme in Kabul. Although the target will be to assist unregistered refugees, this condition cannot always be firmly ascertained. Groups will be escorted by SOP repatriation staff to the border to verify departure. An additional 200 families have already expressed interest in returning during the Spring, 1992.

3. Monitoring Borders and Routes of Return

Building upon the results obtained during 1991, SOP will continue to put a high priority on the collection of data on returnees at the major crossings in NWFP. Emphasis will be placed on getting greater cooperation from the Government of Pakistan to issue instructions to border officials and the Frontier Corps to maintain complete records of return movement. Reports will be regularly compiled by repatriation staff who will periodically visit the border to verify records, interview returnees and assess movements. Increased attention will be given to identify returnees at checkposts, overnight facilities (hotels, campgrounds and chaikhanas), and major bazaars and transportation points. Mobile monitoring teams will work in close cooperation with encashment sites to identify groups wishing to avail themselves of UNHCR escort assistance to the border.

4. Analysis of Encashment Trends

The encashment locations continue to be an important source of information on repatriation trends, identifying routes of return, dates and time of departure, size of families, current conditions in Afghanistan and the cost of transport. Emphasis will be placed on greater cooperation between encashment and repatriation monitoring staff to coordinate information which will assist in identifying returnees at borders and along routes of return. Encashment assistants have been encouraged to be more analytical in assessing the trends of return and reporting on their impressions and conclusions. Based on available

information, additional follow-up can be conducted by field staff monitoring camp conditions and refugee movements.

5. Population Surveys in Afghanistan

After the unsuccessful results of surveys by NGO staff in Afghanistan, discussions have been initiated with the Swedish Committee Agricultural Survey for Afghanistan to conduct village level surveys in 15 key districts selected by UNHCR. SCA staff familiar with the area will interview local farmers and landowners to track movements into the district over the past year and identify through needs assessment the current absorption capacity and the likely impact of future returns on the local economy. Current planning calls for 28 enumerators and 14 supervisors to conduct 2 surveys annually in 50 villages per district. The targeted provinces are Paktia, Nangarhar, Kandahar, Helmand, Kunduz and Baghlan. In addition to tracking repatriation to priority areas, the approach will prioritize needs for targeted assistance. More specific details about needs would enable UN agencies to present credible funding proposals to donors.

6. Cross Border Missions

SOP will continue to undertake cross border missions to districts of priority to monitor conditions, assess needs and track return movement. The emphasis would continue to be on small Afghan staff missions which can operate with greater flexibility without raising expectations. Missions are increasingly being made in cooperation with NGOs which are working in the area, known to local leaders and familiar with the situation. Missions for the sole purpose of gathering information without the prospect of funding rehabilitation projects continue to be viewed as an unacceptable intrusion into local affairs.

7. In-Camp Monitoring

SOP field and repatriation staff will continue to closely monitor indicators of refugee movement from the camps. Particular attention will be paid to camps with high encashment levels where dismantled houses confirm departure from the camp. Confirmation of movements will be pursued with health, education and social service providers as well as camp administrators and security staff. Interviews by Afghan staff with refugees and refugee elders is an ongoing activity to identify departures and is particularly helpful with unregistered populations. As repatriation becomes more open, acceptable and less political, discussions with refugee elders can serve more for the purpose of providing information on available assistance through encashment, assisted transportation and the Peace House programme.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR EVENTS IN AFGHANISTAN

1. Military Developments

1.1 The fall of Khost provided the mujahideen with their first major victory since the withdrawal of Soviet troops. This was followed by further successes in the northern provinces of Kunduz, Takhar and Badakhshan. The mujahideen offensive on Gardez was repulsed by extensive aerial bombardment and divisions caused by tribal politics. Kabul government forces successfully captured the strategic gorge of Tangi-i-Waghjan in Logar but failed to dislodge mujahideen positions in Khanabad (Kunduz) and Zindajan (Herat). Inter-mujahideen differences escalated to open warfare in Kunar when followers of Hezb-i-Islami (Hekmatyar) ousted the Arab-backed Salafi administration.

1.2 The Council of Commanders fell far short of expectations to bring unity and coordination to military activities among the mujahideen. The decision not to interfere in political decisions and the failure to have a role in the distribution of arms and supplies rendered the body ineffective.

2. International Developments

2.1 Against the background of the five-point UN plan for settlement of the Afghan issue, there was an increase in diplomatic activity on the negotiation front: two rounds of tripartite talks between the mujahideen, Pakistan and Iran were held in Islamabad and Tehran; a mujahideen delegation went to New York for the UN General Assembly session; and, a delegation headed by Prof. Rabbani paid an official visit to Moscow. The primary impediment which has emerged is the call for an intra-Afghan dialogue between the warring parties. Preparations for the various talks and rumours of secret negotiations have accentuated the deep divisions which exist among the resistance parties.

2.2 The full impact of recent international events on Afghanistan is not yet known. The Gulf War further exposed divisions among the mujahideen as well as aggravating relations with outside supporters, principally Arab and American. The failed coup in Moscow and the collapse of the Soviet Union along with the agreement to implement negative symmetry would appear to undercut Kabul's principal source of military support. The most significant development, however, is the independence of the Central Asian Islamic Republics and the creation of new trading markets for Pakistan. If Pakistan (specifically the Port of Karachi) is to benefit, access through Afghanistan is essential and current indications are that the Central Asian Republics (which are still governed by former communists) do not favor a fundamentalist regime on their southern border. Pakistan, therefore, has greater reason to pursue a diplomatic settlement which isolates the more extreme opposition parties.

2.3 The inclusion of Zahir Shah in a settlement again became an issue of public speculation as the year came to an end. This seems to be an annual occurrence, however this time it was in connection with the UN

5-point peace plan as the head of a transitional government. Although his opponents have loudly and publicly condemned his participation in any settlement, he is believed to have wide popularity among the Afghan population. It would seem that his support stems more from a desire to end the continuous conflict and return to a time nostalgically viewed as a period of stability rather than a recognition of his political and leadership qualities.

3. Political Developments

3.1 The stature of the Afghan Interim Government (AIG) as an alternative authority continued to decline. At the beginning of the year, all ministries, with the exception of health, were forced to close for budgetary reasons and over 4,000 employees were terminated. In October, the Ministry of Education was resuscitated by a donation of Rs 189 million from the government of Saudi Arabia. Plans to hold elections to a Loya Jirga were abandoned due to internal disagreements. In November, Pakistani officials prompted the mujahideen leaders to again work towards the establishment of a 100-member shura in a blatant attempt to undercut the UN plan for a broad-based government; however, since it was predicated on the same narrow base as the current AIG, the effort was doomed to failure.

3.2 Although the Kabul government did not have any major gains at home or abroad, it's continued survival strengthens the argument for their inclusion in any post-settlement administration. Divisions within the ruling Watan party remain and efforts have been undertaken to improve its image by moving toward a multiparty system, establishment of a free economy and securing religious freedom. Outlaw militias, widespread corruption and economic difficulties, however, tended to undermine popular support for reform. Inflation drove up prices for essential commodities and as winter approached fears of food and fuel shortages and uncertainty over available outside assistance prevailed.

PROVINCIAL UPDATE: NANGARHAR

1. Political and Security Situation in Nangarhar

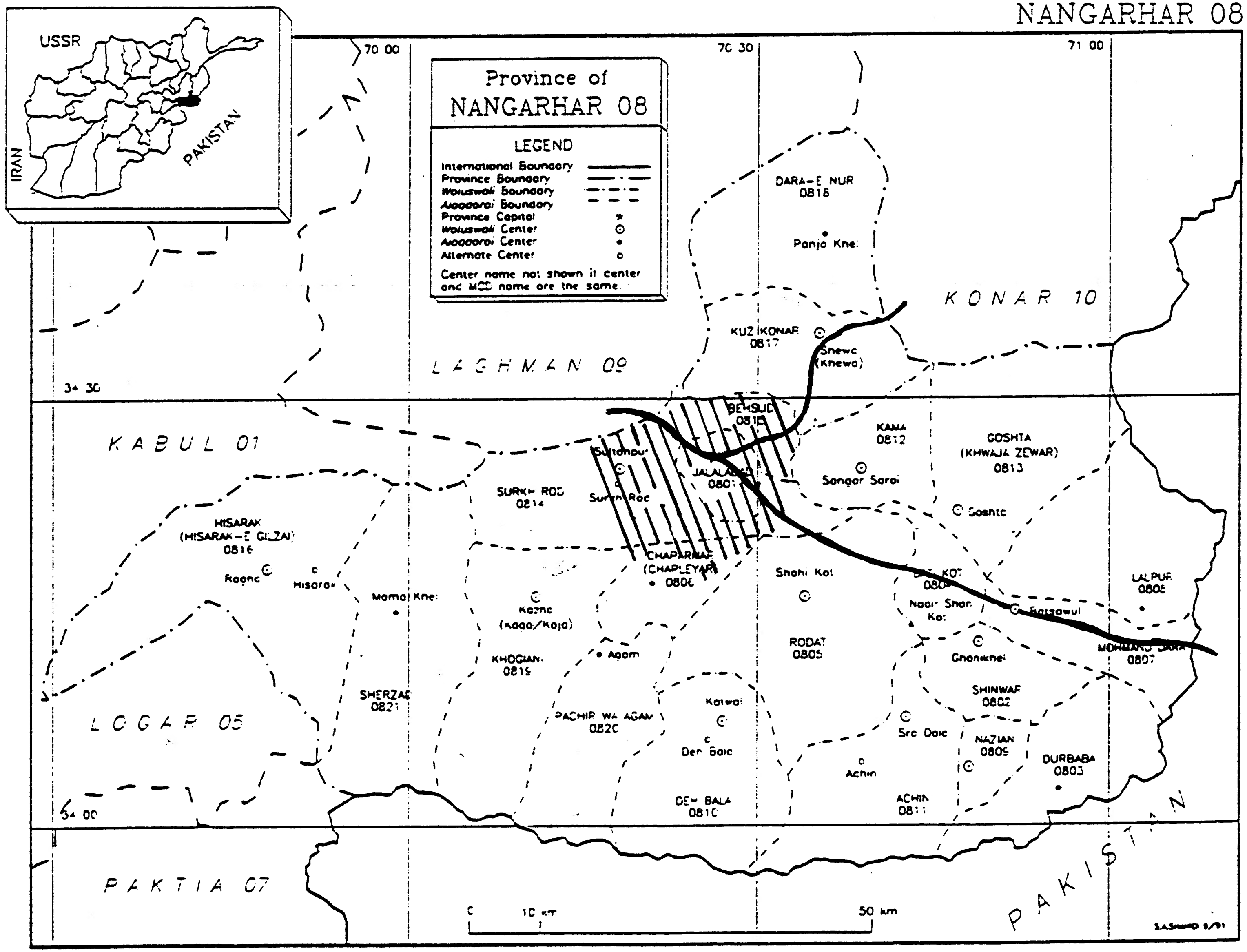
1.1 The principal area of conflict in Nangarhar continues to be around the security belt of Jalalabad and along the main Torkham-Jalalabad-Kabul road. During 1991, bombing of areas further afield from the security ring has intensified as rumours of a planned mujahideen attack on Jalalabad circulate. In April, government jets bombed Khogiani district before transporting military supplies through the district. Reportedly, 26 bombs fell on Mimly village. Also that month, the government bombed mujahideen bases on the outskirts of Jalalabad fearing a possible attack after the fall of Khost. Bombings were reported in Rodat, Ghaziabad, Bati Kot and Kama. Activity continued to escalate in May as mujahideen and government forces made military preparations. The government launched two convoys from Kabul to Jalalabad each with some 200 vehicles and tanks. Additional supplies, including Lunar rockets, were flown to Jalalabad as the government consolidated their position around the city. Bombing at a level not seen in the past two years continued for more than 2 weeks in Chaparhar, Hesarak, Rodat, Ghanikhel and Momandara.

1.2 Tensions continued to escalate and during the final week of July fighting intensified and continued through mid-August. A scud landed in the Landi Khyber area on the Jalalabad-Torkham highway near Pakistan territory as aircraft bombed Chaparhar, Rodat, Surkh Deval, Bati Kot and Samarkhel. Fighting extended along the highway from Sarobi to Kabul with attacks in the But Khak and Malang areas 10 km east of Kabul which periodically closed the highway. Darunta Dam was attacked by the mujahideen and the damage cut off electricity to Jalalabad. Operations were launched by the mujahideen against the airport and military installations in Jalalabad; in retaliation, government planes bombed Sarobi, Tor Ghar, Surkh Rod, Khewa, Rodat, Samarkhel and Shinwar. The government reportedly transported a large number of Scuds to Jalalabad which were mounted on mobile launchers and pointed toward mujahideen areas and security posts along the Pakistan-Afghan border.

1.3 Transportation of foreign goods from Jalalabad to Pakistan is a major activity in the province and the collection of customs taxes on transporters remains one of the main factors for inter-mujahideen rivalry in the area. Disruptions along the trade routes increases the tension not only among the mujahideen but with tribal leaders in Pakistan as well. Mujahideen charge between Afs 800,000 and 1,600,000 on each vehicle. In July, long range missiles and artillery launched along mujahideen routes in Rodat district forced the mujahideen to open another trade route north of Jalalabad which takes merchandise and goods from Laghman and Kunar to Nangarhar. Inter-mujahideen clashes in Kunar in August closed off all transportation routes through the province for 3 months, redirecting the traffic south by a lengthier route through Paktia to Kurram Agency. By the end of the year, the preferred and most direct route was again open through Kuz Kunar (Nangarhar) north through Kunar province to Nawa pass.

1.4 From October 11 to 16, mujahideen launched an offensive on

NANGARHAR 08



///// Government controlled area

Jalalabad with tanks and heavy weapons captured by the U.S. allied forces in Iraq and Kuwait during the Gulf War. Rocket attacks on the city caused heavy civilian and property loss. The areas of Surkhrud and Chaparhar were the main fronts of the battle. Government air supremacy successfully held back the offensive with bombardment of mujahideen positions and supply depots.

2. Repatriation Trends: Nangarhar

2.1 Despite the military activity in the province, there was a continual flow of returning refugees. As the bombardments were frequently targeting transportation routes, it was necessary for returning families to make last minute changes in their route of return. On some days, families were turned away by transporters at Torkham because there were no safe roads open. The Afghan Information Center (AIC) reported that during the first half of March, 5 families were crossing the border daily. On 19 March, 12 families were seen and on 28 March, 20 families. An AIC correspondent from the border area of Torkham reported that 1412 families returned to Afghanistan via Torkham between 1-15 June.

2.2 Border crossing officials stationed at Torkham identified 1421 families (13,015 individuals) returning to Nangarhar between 19 April - 31 December. The largest districts of destination are as follows:

District	Families	Individuals
Khogiani	352	3330
Achin	280	2431
Chaparhar	198	1803
Sinwar	113	1095
Hesarak	70	825
Rodat	77	676

2.3 The cumulative total for encashments to Nangarhar (28 July 1990 - 24 December 1991) is 4,150 families (23,466 individuals). Of this total, 85% of the encashments, or 3,466 families with 19,633 individuals, encashed their passbooks during the past year (between 20 December 1990 - 19 December 1991). The breakdown for 1991 by district in rank order is as follows:

District	Families	Individuals
Khogiani	804	4558
Kama	419	2340
Shinwar	334	1863
Rodat	315	1824
Jalalabad	286	1546
Sorkh Rod	221	1243
Mohmand Dara	212	1229
Chaparhar	201	1224
Deh Bala	123	733
Achin	98	549

2.4 Four cross-border missions by UNHCR repatriation staff were undertaken to Nangarhar during the year, with special attention being paid to Khogiani district. The findings confirmed that "a tangible return has taken place to most of Khogiani and an increasing trend exists." Similar conclusions to a lesser degree were drawn from observations in Rodat, Shinwar, Sorkh Rod and Mohmand Dara where return on a modest scale was identified in the areas visited. It is reasonable to conclude that a significant increase in return has occurred during the year to specific areas of Nangarhar province, most noticeably to Khogiani district. There is every reason to believe that the trend of return to Nangarhar will continue and in all likelihood increase during the coming year assuming that the security situation does not further deteriorate.

1991 -- REPATRIATION SECTION OVERVIEW

1. Introduction

1.1 During early 1991, expectations were high that the level of repatriation from Pakistan could increase substantially over the previous year. These expectations were based on several factors:

- -the repatriation assistance programme was operational and attaining increased acceptance as a means of financial assistance with return;
- -in the two years since the final withdrawal of Soviet troops, conditions had allowed an increasing number of families to return either periodically or partially to their home area and begin reconstruction and rehabilitation;
- -the level and scope of fighting had been restricted to limited and identified areas of strategic importance;
- -discussion of plans for repatriation among individual refugees was becoming increasingly more common;
- -conditions for refugees in Pakistan were becoming more difficult with a reduction in the level of assistance in camps, and a growing sense among the local population that refugees were becoming a burden and overstaying their welcome;
- -increased activity on the diplomatic front encouraged an optimistic impression that an end to the conflict could be achieved at the negotiation table rather than on the battlefield.

UNHCR planning for repatriation in 1991 operated on the premise that the conditions and level of military activity experienced over the past two years would remain constant. Under these circumstances, it was felt that repatriation would gradually increase, and could dramatically increase, despite the failure to achieve a political settlement and that larger areas of Afghanistan would see a cessation of open conflict.

1.2 It became increasingly apparent by Spring, however, that the conflict in Afghanistan was escalating as both government and resistance forces attempted to seize the advantage and enhance their negotiating position. The provinces of priority for repatriation bordering NWFP witnessed an increase in military hostilities unprecedented in recent years. In view of the deteriorating situation, fewer refugees than initially forecast saw repatriation during the year as a viable option.

1.3 Early in the year, UNHCR re-examined the data obtained for the Refugee Origins Survey to determine the provinces and districts which were of greatest concern to UNHCR for repatriation of the majority of refugees in Pakistan. As a result, 9 provinces (42 districts) were identified from which 83% of the refugees in Pakistan originate. Sub-Office Peshawar is most directly concerned with the four provinces of Paktia, Nangarhar, Logar and Kunar (22 districts) and, to the extent possible, the northern provinces of Kunduz and Baghlan (7

PROVINCIAL UPDATE: PAKTIA

1. Political and Security Situation in Paktia

1.1 The attack on Khost began in early March with rockets launched from mujahideen positions. On 15 March, the mujahideen hit the central oil reservoir of the government forces with Sukker-20 missiles; the radio station of Khost city and the radar system at the airport were also destroyed. A joint mujahideen attack was launched on security posts surrounding Khost with missiles and artillery. The government was prevented from sending in fresh supplies either by land or air, and after three days of rocket attacks, the mujahideen were able to break the security belt in the eastern portion of the city. The operations were carried out under the supervision of a council consisting of commanders of the seven resistance parties. The government retaliated with Scud and air bombardment of mujahideen positions.

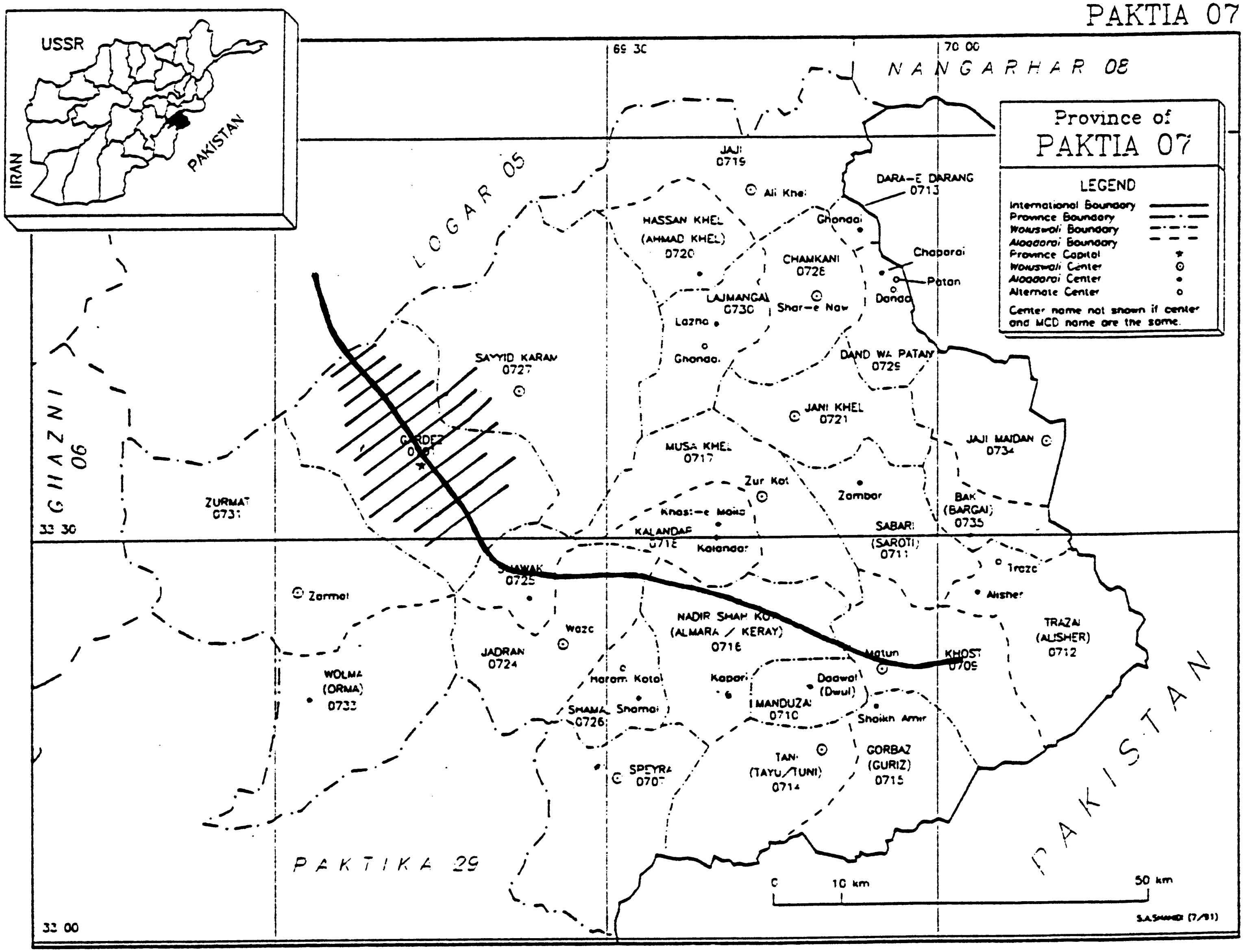
1.2 On 22 March, Jaji Maidan district, located in eastern Paktia on the Pakistan border, came under the control of the mujahideen. The operation on Jaji Maidan was launched simultaneously with Khost to keep government forces dispersed. The district had remained under government control for 13 years and this was the first time it had fallen to the mujahideen. From a strategic point of view, control of Jaji Maidan significantly reduced the distance for mujahideen to resupply Khost and Gardez. While under government control, Jaji Maidan garrison played a key role in supplying Khost with food smuggled from Pakistan.

1.3 After 18 days, the operation for Khost came to a successful conclusion for the mujahideen on the evening of 31 March. The fall of the new airport triggered a chain of defections which led to the complete abandonment of the city by government forces. Throughout the battle, families were fleeing the city and seeking refuge in Miranshah and border towns. Over 17,000 people were recorded as entering Pakistan as refugees.

1.4 Less than one month after the fall of Khost, mujahideen forces launched minor skirmishes on the provincial capital of Gardez. Most of the activity in succeeding months concentrated on outlying districts. The road leading from Pul-e-Alam (Logar) was periodically closed and attacks were launched on Kabul forces in Sayed Karam and Zormat. The Kabul government continued to launch Scud missiles against mujahideen forces in Khost and along border areas. In August, mujahideen began receiving armoured tanks, APCs, 144mm guns, long range rockets and antiaircraft guns captured by US and allied troops from Iraqi forces in the gulf, at the same time as the US and USSR reached agreement to halt arms supplies to both combatants.

1.5 Plans for an assault on Gardez appeared to be thrown into confusion. The mujahideen forces remained divided over the distribution of booty from Khost; mujahideen surrounding Gardez were mainly of Ahmadzai tribe who strongly opposed participation of mujahideen from Khost in the planned operations against Gardez and feared a repetition of the destruction which took place in Khost. Kabul, meanwhile, had

PAKTIA 07



///// Government controlled area

deployed units of the Special Guard, Gelam Jan militia, police force, party activists and troops from Khost in Gardez. Government officers who escaped Khost and returned to Kabul had been sent to Gardez and tightened their control of the Kabul-Gardez and Gardez-Ghazni highways to ensure that reinforcements could be sent from Kabul to Gardez in 3 hours.

1.6 In late September, mujahideen began shelling Gardez with long range artillery and launched attacks on the Kabul-Gardez highway. After the fall of government posts in Sayed Karam district, mujahideen penetrated into the security belt around Gardez and launched mortar and rocket attacks on government forces. Mujahideen activities were coordinated by a local council under the leadership of Haqqani and made use of tanks and heavy artillery. By mid-October, Sayed Karam district and the native village of Najibullah had been captured by the mujahideen.

1.7 In early November, the fighting escalated as mujahideen advanced toward Gardez from Zormat and captured several government posts. The government enjoyed full control of the road from Gardez to Pul-e-Alam (Logar) and launched heavy bombardment operations against mujahideen positions around Gardez. In mid-November, government troops carried out ground attacks against the mujahideen in the direction of Zormat and Sayed Karam. By November 18, government troops recaptured most of their lost position around Gardez and the intensity of fighting reduced to shelling between the two sides.

2. Repatriation Trends: Paktia

2.1 After the fall of Khost on 31 March, the region remained insecure for the next two months with periodic Scud and aerial bombardment by the Kabul government. Individual movement, however, was observed to the surrounding areas of the city as relatives returned in the summer to harvest the crops planted before the outbreak of hostilities. In addition, migrant refugees from the Punjab were observed spending the summer months on the Afghan side of the border for the first time. As the summer progressed, families were increasingly seen returning to the Khost area. During the coming year, return to the area is expected to increase dramatically due to the strong tribal influence and indications of the mutual desire of elders and refugees to return. Rehabilitation activities are being prepared by NGOs with coordination through ACBAR and funding from UNDP.

2.2 There is little evidence of return to western Paktia where fighting in Gardez has continued throughout much of the year. In contrast, the level of return to northern Paktia is widely believed to be greater than the indicators suggest. Observations by NGOs and UNHCR continue to maintain that movement to the area is constant. It is assumed that the easy access from Pakistan allows gradual return of partial families to proceed almost undetected; further, until access to the markets of Kabul and Jalalabad is obtained, families will continue to be oriented towards Pakistan for goods, services and supplemental income. Families, therefore, remain split and the degree of return is not reflected in either encashment or border crossing statistics.

2.3 Paktia is the second highest destination for refugees observed at the borders, although the totals are deceptively low. A total of 475 families (4293 individuals) have been registered as returnees for Paktia with the following districts figuring most prominently:

District	Families	Individuals
Khost	129	1056
Jaji (Ali Khel)	44	659
Mandozai	80	656
Tani	46	433
Jadran	33	322
Chamkani	41	319
Gurbaz	31	304

2.4 Since the beginning of the encashment programme (July, 1990), encashments for Paktia have totaled 1,902 families with 10,247 individuals (as of 24 December 1991). Of this total, 66% or a total of 1,264 families with 6,999 individuals, encashed during 1991. The principal districts of intended return given at encashment are as follows:

District	Families	Individuals
Jadran	398	2205
Khost	292	1564
Zormat	199	1141
Jaji	119	685
Gardez	61	329

PROVINCIAL UPDATE: KUNAR

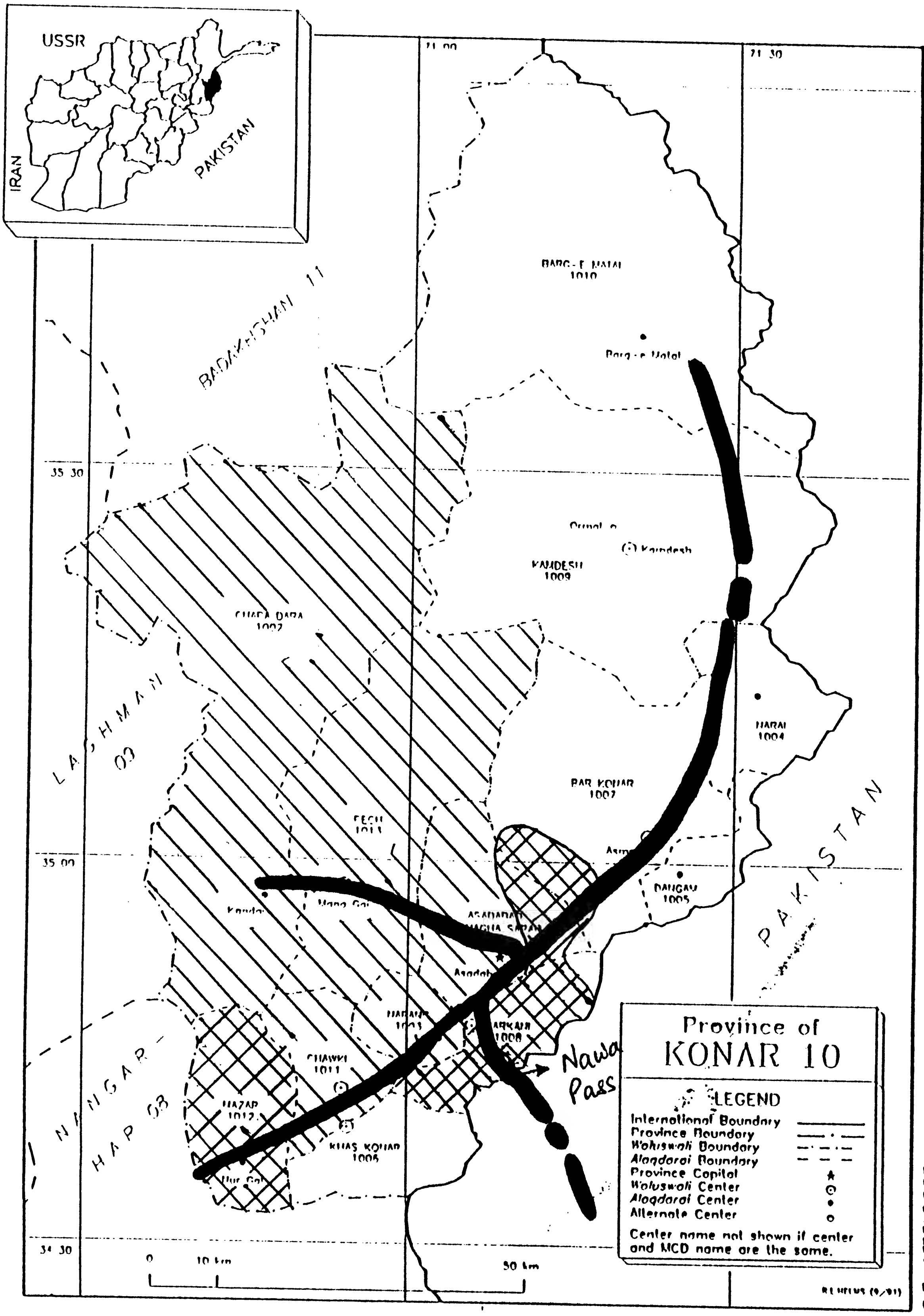
1. Political and Security Situation in Kunar

1.1 The relative peace which Kunar had enjoyed after the withdrawal of the Soviets in the summer of 1988 was suddenly disrupted on 20 April when an explosion rocked the central square of Asadabad and destroyed half of the market. Estimates put the number of deaths at 300 with many more injured; most of the victims were shopkeepers and travellers, including Pakistanis enroute from Chitral to Peshawar. The official explanation attributed the blast to Scud missiles launched by Kabul in retaliation for the fall of Khost; speculation ranged from sabotage to inter-mujahideen rivalry or pure accident. The center of the blast was an arms and ammunition bazaar which caught fire, exploded and spread to a nearby petroleum depot.

1.2 In late August, mujahideen under Hezb-i-Islami (Hekmatyar) recaptured bases in Kunar which had been overrun four months earlier by Salafi mujahideen under Jamil-ur-Rehman. For one week, heavy fighting raged between the two rival mujahideen groups: Hezb-i-Islami recaptured Nawa Pass, Nawabad, Tangu and Sarkano areas; Jamaat Da'wa (Salafi) launched raids on Shegal town and refused to negotiate a settlement with Hezb-i-Islami forces. By 26 August, Hezbi troops controlled the road from Nawa Pass to Asadabad and the center of the province. The Salafis retreated to Peche Valley and their leader, Mawlawi Jamil-ur-Rehman, escaped to Bajour Agency, where on 29 August, he was shot dead by an Egyptian. Troubles between the parties have been simmering since the Soviet withdrawal in 1988. Jamaat Da'wa had refused to join any administration created by the other parties; however when Hezb-i-Islami withdrew from the AIG in mid-1989, the two rivals united to oppose a Kunar administration appointed by the AIG. After expelling the AIG, Hezbi and Da'wa agreed to hold a general election (March 1990), but the results were not clear and both sides claimed victory. For one year prior to the recent outbreak, the rivalry was confined to a propaganda war as each attempted to consolidate their power and establish an administration. The Salafis controlled more than 60% of the province, while the AIG and Hezb were active in the remainder. As a result of the clashes in August, the balance was reversed and Da'wa lost control of the main Kunar valley and maintained a presence only in Peche.

1.3 During the internal fighting in Kunar, many of the NGO offices were looted and ACBAR announced the decision to suspend all relief activities in the province until the situation was normalized. Under the administration of Hezb-i-Islami, sporadic fighting continued and both sides occasionally exchanged heavy artillery. Despite the continuing security problems, however, the routes through Kunar to Laghman and Nangarhar were reopened for passenger traffic. At the beginning of November, the fighting again intensified for two weeks as Salafi supporters overran Hezbi positions in Asadabad, Narang, Chawki and Khas Kunar and once again the balance shifted in favor of Da'wa.

1.4 A jirga was convened which included members from both warring factions, other party representatives, elders from the region and the Government of Pakistan. The jirga formed a commission to oversee the



KONAR 10

//// Salafi controlled area

XXXX Hezb-i-Islami controlled areas

situation and announced a cease-fire until a final decision is made. The commission is headed by Mawlawi Pacha, a member of Jamiat Islami, and all expenses are shared by Hezb-e-Islami and Salafi parties. A security force of 1000 persons which has been formed under the command of the commission and consists of all mujahideen parties, including Hezb-e-Islami and Da'wa. At year-end, the commission is in control of the situation and conditions have improved but no final resolution has been reached about the dispute between the two factions. NGOs have suspended any new activities in the province pending a final agreement and establishment of a recognized authority.

2. Repatriation Trends: Kunar

2.1 Due to the deteriorated security condition in Kunar, return to the province has been negligible. When the explosion occurred in Asadabad bazaar on 20 April, there was much public criticism of the repatriation programme for encouraging return when security could not be assured. It was argued that safety could not be guaranteed until a new government was installed in Kabul. With the outbreak of inter-party fighting in Kunar during the last half of the year, there was increased reluctance to return until a stable administration was installed. Checkposts were established by the rival parties to restrict movement in the province and required party identification for permission to pass; women and children were turned back unless a permit had been obtained from the Governor.

2.2 Nawa Pass, the principal entry to Kunar from Pakistan, was closed on several occasions preventing access to the province. The border remained closed for weeks at a time whenever hostilities broke out in Kunar as well as when Mohmand tribesmen in Pakistan battled Pakistani government troops over a local dispute. Despite the closure, encashment for Kunar continued and families stated that they would be returning when the pass opened. Registration records at the border, however, were not well maintained and only 118 families with 841 individuals were identified by officials as returnees for Kunar. After the declaration of a cease-fire, traders and transporters increasingly preferred the route across Nawa Pass through Kunar to Jalalabad for moving goods to Kabul as being quicker and safer although subject to heavy taxation by both the government and mujahideen.

2.3 Encashment figures for Kunar have remained constant since the beginning of the programme in July, 1990, with a total of 2,906 families representing 14,457 individuals. There has, however, been no dramatic increase and during the past year (20 December 1990 - 19 December 1991) the total has been 1781 families with 8992 individuals destined to the following major districts:

District	Families	Individuals
Bar Konar (Asmar)	693	3198
Peche	341	1743
Asadabad	280	1430
Chowki	135	791

PROVINCIAL UPDATE: LOGAR

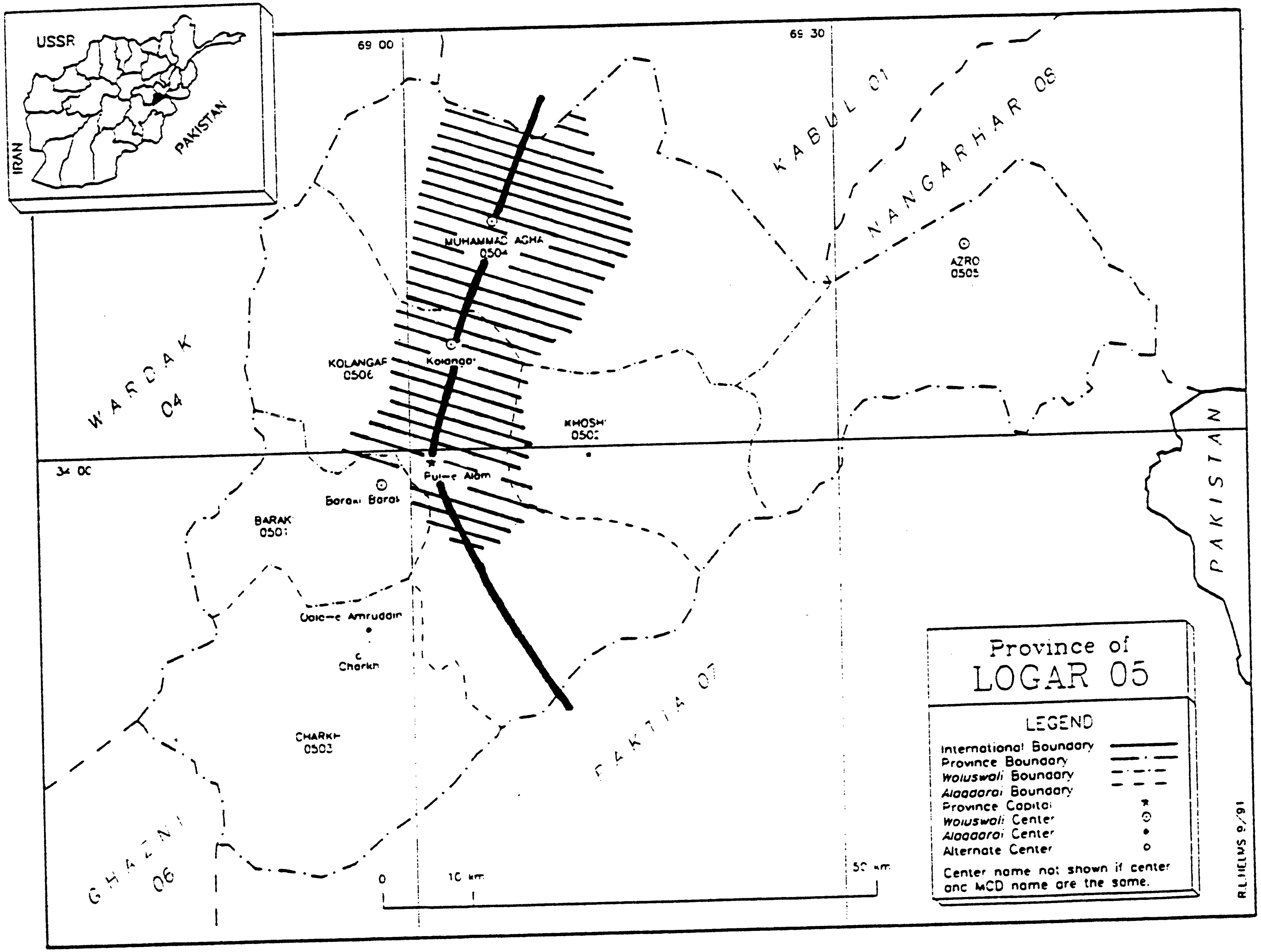
1. Political and Security Situation in Logar

1.1 The military activity which began in Logar in late 1990, intensified throughout the first half of 1991, and was further complicated by harsh winter conditions and heavy snowfall. The militia of Sayed Kayan was deployed by the government to military installations in Mohammad Agha district where government forces were under heavy siege by mujahideen. Government aerial and rocket attacks continued in January as government advances were repulsed by the mujahideen. Logar is of great strategic importance to both sides of the conflict, providing access to Kabul and Gardez; it serves as the lifeline of the government forces in Paktia and the mujahideen can cut off ground reinforcements to Khost. Confronted with strong opposition from the mujahideen, the Kabul government contracted the militia of Rashid Dostom to advance the offensive in Logar. The militia first requested Afs 2000 per hour but agreed to Afs 1000. Equipped by the government, they were authorized to use whatever force necessary to maintain the government position.

1.2 In mid-April, the fighting escalated with Kabul troops supported by air bombardment and rocket shelling. Their target was to attack mujahideen positions in Tangi Waghjan, 35 km south of Kabul, to secure its supply route to Gardez. On 24 April, the government captured Lashkar-e-Isar, the main base of Hezb-e-Islami (Hekmatyar) in Logar and brought the area under government control. The base held between 1200 and 2000 mujahideen and served as a training facility for mujahideen and volunteers from Muslim countries. Its close proximity to Kabul enabled mujahideen to carry out attacks on the capital and retreat to the base. The government forces included 4,000-6,000 Jowzjani militiamen and troops with the ministries of defense and interior and national security, backed by air and ground support. Only Ittehad (Sayaaf) and Hezb-e-Islami (Hekmatyar) were active in resisting the offensive. Reports are that differences had developed between Hezb commanders and Shahnawaz Tanai (leader of the coup attempt in 1990), whose nomination as chief of the base had been strongly opposed. It was rumoured that Kabul agents had penetrated the base and assisted government forces in the attack.

1.3 After suffering a military defeat in Khost, the Kabul government scored a victory when it captured Tangi Waghjan and Laskar-e-Esar. The government retained control over the Kabul-Gardez highway, had pushed the resistance forces away from Kabul and created difficulties for the mujahideen along their supply routes. The mujahideen faced problems due to flooding of the Logar river which restricted their movement and supplies. Fighting continued and expanded throughout the area, but the mujahideen have been unable to regain their position.

1.4 Fighting continued periodically during the following months as mujahideen launched offensives against government forces in Mohammad Agha, Dasht-i-Babos, Baraki Barak, Zarghoon Shahr, Pul-i-Alam, Tangi Waghjan, Turaghundi and Lashkar-i-Esar. The government maintained tight control over the Kabul-Gardez (Paktia) road which passes through



///// Government controlled area

Logar to ensure their ability to resupply government troops defending Gardez during the final months of the year.

2. Repatriation Trends: Logar

2.1 Of all the provinces of priority for repatriation, Logar has shown the lowest levels of return. Its proximity to Kabul makes it an easy target for government attacks on mujahideen positions and its distance from Pakistan limits partial and seasonal return. From a strategic point of view, Logar is essential for the government to supply Gardez in Paktia. There are routes through Logar, however, which are frequently used by returnees and traders proceeding to Kabul, but permanent return to the province is negligible.

2.2 Encashment and border records confirm the low level of return. Only 51 families with 725 individuals have been identified at the border; 38 families did not identify the district of return, while 13 families were returning to non-priority districts. From encashment records, a total of 551 families with 2741 individuals claimed Logar as their destination since the commencement of the programme; during 1991 (20 December 1990 - 24 December 1991), 320 families with 1617 individuals encashed their books. Most interesting is that the district of highest outflow (Kolangar) has the lowest encashment rate (only 6 families in 1990 and 22 families in 1991). The highest destinations during the past year are as follows:

District	Families	Individuals
Baraki	90	457
Mohammad Agha	81	397
Azra	65	327

districts). By narrowing the focus, SOP has been placed in a better position to monitor return and to judge the impact of political and military developments on repatriation.

1.4 Monitoring repatriation movements during 1991 concentrated on identifying levels of return from refugee villages, encashment activity, border crossing records, village level surveys in Afghanistan and cross border missions to areas of priority by UNHCR repatriation staff. Each approach provided varying levels of success and are examined in greater detail later in this report. Overall, however, UNHCR Pakistan is better able to identify when, where and how many refugees are returning to Afghanistan. Concerted efforts have been made to determine the degree of linkage between repatriation and encashment.

1.5 No cross-border projects were funded by UNHCR in Peshawar during 1991 as other UN organizations continued to assume a greater role in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Afghanistan. However, efforts were undertaken to work closely with these funding sources to direct their assistance to geographical areas and programme sectors which are of particular interest to UNHCR for returnees. In an approach to integrated programming, UNHCR Peshawar brought interested NGOs together to coordinate a shelter and community development plan for Khogiani (Nangarhar). Increased efforts in the field of joint programme integration and cooperation will be made in the future to support areas where repatriation has been identified.

1.6 Senior Afghan staff in the Repatriation Unit attended a UNHCR seminar on refugee law which outlined protection issues related to repatriation. Protection activities concentrated on monitoring the major routes of return in Pakistan and accompanying returnee families through tribal agencies to the borders. Although few protection issues were encountered, many transporters and refugees acknowledged that due to UNHCR presence, payment and delays at various checkposts had been effectively eliminated. Frequent field missions to major border crossings enabled UNHCR to inform border officials of policies and guidelines regarding returnees while monitoring movements.

1.7 The character of return in 1991 has tended to be individual families returning to nearby districts in pick-up trucks or groups of families returning to more distant provinces in lorries. The families made few pronouncements in camp of their intention to return and concealed their departure by moving at night and telling neighbors that they were leaving for other camps or to the urban areas of Pakistan. The timing of departure was dependent upon security enroute and was postponed if no alternative route was available. The route of return was often subject to last-minute change due to security concerns, generally favoring a route which was longer, more expensive and more difficult over a road passing through or near areas of potential conflict. All returnees transiting through unfamiliar territory receive letters from political parties to ensure safe passage (this is particularly true for long distance return to northern areas).

PROVINCIAL UPDATE: BAGHLAN

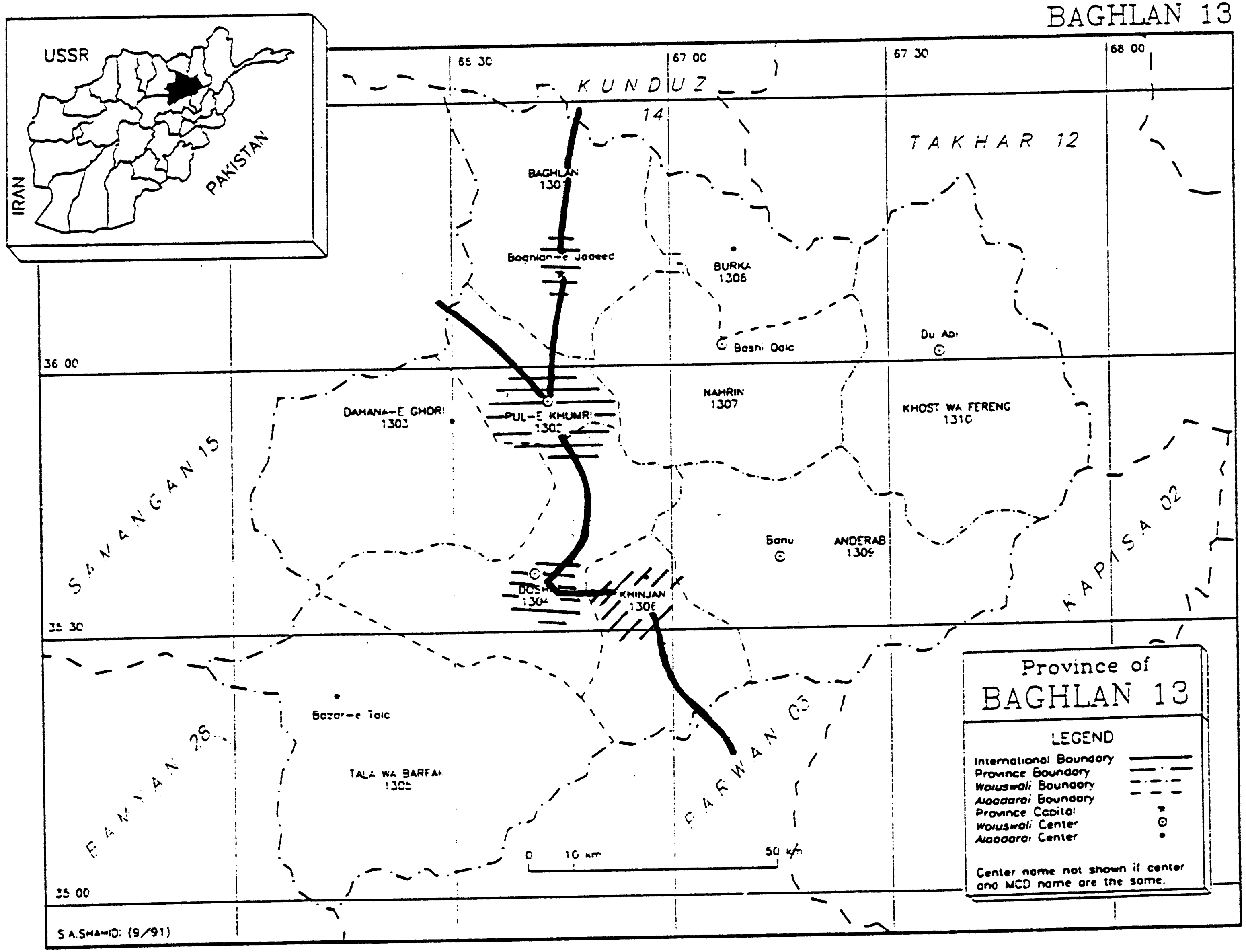
1. Political and Security Situation in Baghlan

1.1 All areas of Baghlan province, except for the provincial centre of Baghlan city and district centres along the highway, are under the control of the mujahideen and more than half the population remained throughout the war. The area has always been important for its agricultural productivity and its strategic location for trade and transportation between the northern provinces and Kabul. Prices for foodstuff, medicine and other goods have remained cheaper than other areas of Afghanistan. The primary defense of government positions is the responsibility of the militia of Sayed Kayan, a pro-government religious leader of the Ismaelia sect. The Kayani militia, however, maintains relations with both sides of the conflict and both prominent mujahideen commanders and government authorities are known to spend their days and nights in the guest house of Sayed Kayan.

1.2 Mujahideen forces frequently attack government outposts around the centre and government convoys along the highway between Baghlan and Pul-e-Khumri. Government forces are not able to move freely outside the security belt of the urban areas of Baghlan. The road between Shomali Salang and Pul-e-Khumri is controlled by Hezb-e-Islami; the remaining highway under the Shura-e-Nazar. The mujahideen do not want (or are unable) to block the supply routes of the civilians. The road between Shomali Salang and Kunduz and the road between Samangan and Pul-e-Khumri are guarded by 10,000 troops with the militia of Sayed Kayan. Early in the year, a clash occurred between the government militia and KHAD forces along the Kunduz-Baghlan road when KHAD attacked a militia post responsible for security of the road. The militia post, instead of providing security, had engaged in acts of robbery against civilians and created obstacles for the military forces to carry on regular patrol. There has also been periodic infighting between the forces of Hezb-e-Islami (Hekmatyar) and Jamiat in the district of Nahrin since a Hezbi commander, Eng. Salim, was killed by Jamiat men in 1983. Area control and collection of revenues are the main factors of conflict in the area. The agreement reached in 1990 between Hezb-e-Islami and Jamiat has only moderately reduced tensions in the region. The agreement called for elections in Baghlan which were to serve as an example for the whole country, but they have not been held.

1.3 Commander Abdul Hai Haqjo (Jamiat) continues to be the leading commander of the area for mujahideen forces. Military activity is primarily limited to periodic attacks on government security posts along the highway and occasionally in the center of Baghlan city; in retaliation the government warplanes and artillery forces bomb mujahideen positions. The overall situation could be called an armed stalemate in which neither side gains nor loses territory but both continue to engage in hit-and-run operations to irritate the opposition and remind the other of their presence.

BAGHLAN 13



///// Government controlled areas

2. Repatriation Trends: Baghlan

2.1 Baghlan has consistently maintained a steady flow of return for the past two years. Evidence of return has been confirmed by demolished houses in camps with heavy presence of Baghlan refugees; sub-office Peshawar has further provided direct assistance in transportation to refugees returning to Baghlan; encashment levels have remained consistently high; and finally there is a request to provide additional transportation assistance to 200 unregistered families who plan to return in the Spring of 1992. There is every indication that security and economic conditions are conducive for return to the province.

2.2 The character of return for the northern provinces is distinctly different from refugee movements to areas bordering Pakistan. Families tend to return without having seen the area during their period in exile but rather rely on information received from elders who travel between the camps and Baghlan. They generally receive letters from a leading commander in the area requesting the families to return, and these letters are presented to the party offices in Peshawar for necessary letters of transit which provide a degree of security while enroute home. Although many families continue to travel in small groups of women, children and elderly men following main routes while draft-age men travel by mujahideen routes, increasingly we are noticing a greater willingness to travel in larger groups of complete families along the main routes to Kabul and onward to Baghlan.

2.3 Border crossing records have been unsuccessful in documenting return to the northern areas. This is due to several reasons: first, the most secure route chosen by families and groups is via Wana in South Waziristan where it is difficult for the government to post personnel due to the security concerns; secondly, divided families prefer for the women, children and elderly men to take the shortest route via Torkham and arrange hired transport after the border to Kabul which means they travel without household effects and are easily mixed into the local population crossing the border by foot.

2.4 The total encashment figure (including Baluchistan and NWFP) for Baghlan since the beginning of the programme is 5967 families with 28,429 individuals. For the year 1991 (20 December 1990 - 19 December 1991), the total is 3347 families comprising 16,808 individuals. The majority (64%) of these encashments came from NWFP locations. The principal destinations in the province are as follows:

District	Families	Individuals
Baghlan (centre)	1804	8675
Pol-e-Khomri	1074	5886
Dowshi	227	1104
Nahrin	141	669

PROVINCIAL UPDATE: KUNDUZ

1. Political and Security Situation in Kunduz

1.1 In April, the district of Dasht-i-Archi came firmly under mujahideen control when a militia commander defected to the resistance. Dasht-i-Archi is located on the border between Kunduz and Takhar and control by the government had ensured safe passage for supply convoys to their garrison in Khwaja Ghar, the administrative centre for Takhar province. The fall of Dasht-i-Archi effectively isolated the Khwaja Ghar garrison which in turn fell to the mujahideen after an offensive was launched in early summer.

1.2 From late June to early July, government forces launched a series of offensives against mujahideen positions in Khanabad district. The government hoped that recapturing Khanabad would enhance their chances to crush the offensive being undertaken in neighboring Takhar province for Khwaja Ghar. The bombardment of Khanabad by government forces was reported as "unprecedented during the last 13 years of the war."

1.3 As is the case with Baghlan, the security of government positions in Kunduz is predominantly in the hands of paid militias supported by aerial bombardment and reinforced as necessary with army divisions from Mazar and surrounding areas. The militias of Sayed Kayan and Rashid Dostom occasionally come into open conflict with each other over internal differences; one such clash in August resulted in the death of 21 militiamen from both sides.

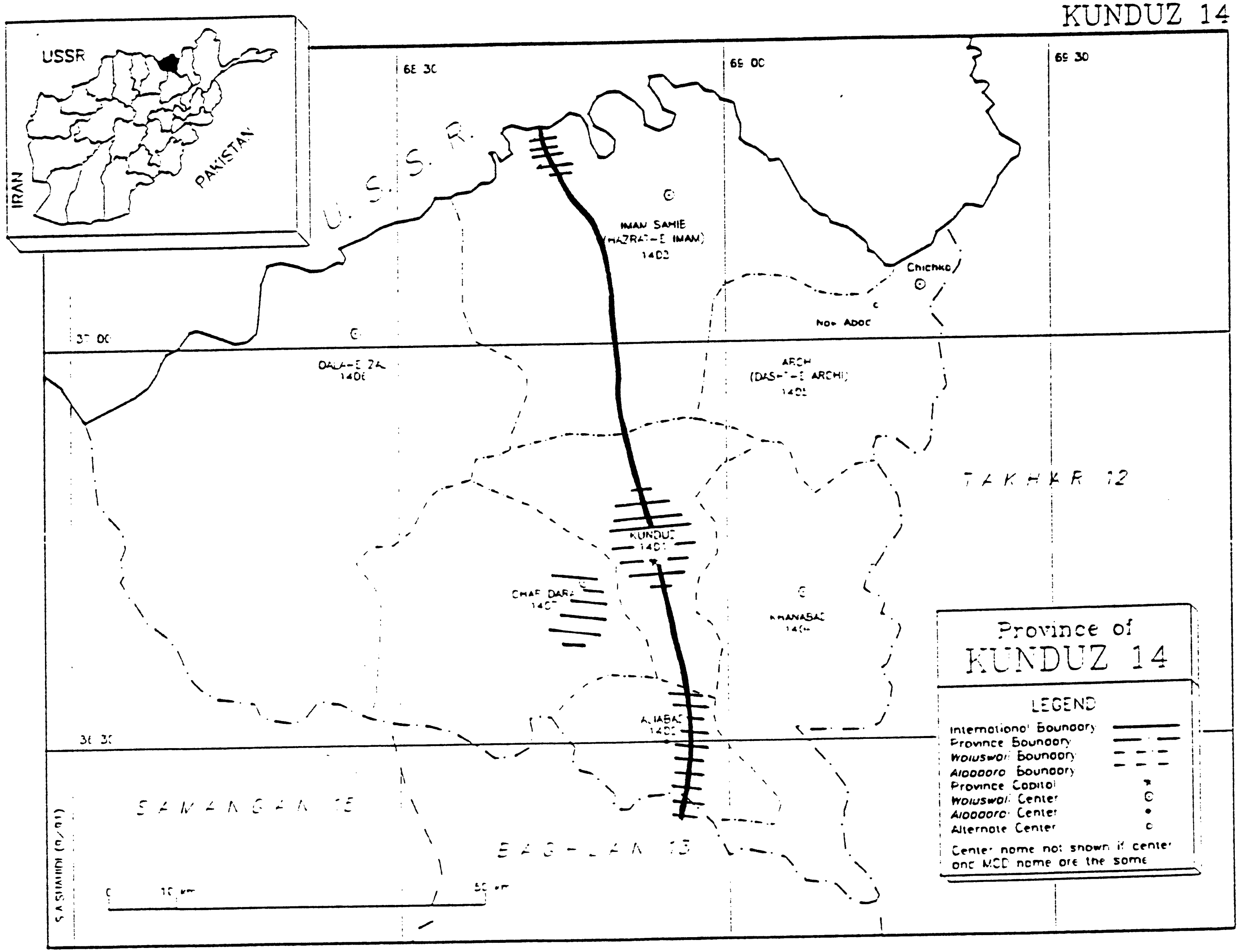
2. Repatriation Trends: Kunduz

2.1 There is no dispute or disagreement in talking with refugees that there is continual return to Kunduz and the northern provinces. It is openly acknowledged by camp elders that families are returning, although reportedly primarily to mujahideen controlled areas. However, for the same reasons given above for Baghlan, these movements are proceeding largely undetected at the border. Confirmation has been primarily obtained through departures from camp, demolished houses, encashment statistics and interviews at time of encashment.

2.2 The encashment figures are impressive and make up the second largest number of encashments by province of destination. The total for Baluchistan and NWFP since the beginning of the programme is 7399 families consisting of 36,435 individuals. For the year 1991, the total is 4490 families with 22,818 individuals. Of this amount, less than half (41%) of the departures originated from NWFP. The distribution tends to be spread throughout the province as shown below:

District	Families	Individuals
Aliabad	1225	6326
Chahar Darreh	952	4385
Archi	934	4876
Kunduz (centre)	716	3673
Emam Saheb	334	1752
Khanabad	304	1681

KUNDUZ 14



///// Government controlled areas

2. Repatriation Monitoring: Encashment

2.1 As of 31 December 1991, the total encashments from NWFP was 22,270 books. This includes 8,789 books surrendered from 28 July - 31 December 1990, and 13,481 books received during the period from 1 January - 31 December 1991. NWFP accounts for approximately 45% of the encashments from Pakistan since the beginning of the programme. Based on sample surveys in the camps and at encashment locations, it is our conclusion that at least 2/3 of the encashments in NWFP represent genuine return. For the provinces of priority for repatriation, the following figures are the total numbers of encashments for NWFP during the year 1991 only:

Nangarhar	3,548
Baghlan	2,148
Kunduz	1,870
Kunar	1,805
Paktia	1,260
Logar	308

2.2 During the winter months, encashment levels were understandably low (less than 100 per week) partly due to restricted winter travel but also due to the closure of all encashment sites for 3 weeks as a result of the Gulf crisis. Activity increased sharply in the last half of February either in preparation for return during the spring or due to a backlog created by the closure. After an initial surge, encashments averaged as follows:

	Average Encashments
March-April	200 per week
May-June	325 per week
July	350 per week
August	300 per week
September	400 per week
October	300 per week
November-December	175 per week

2.3 The highest weeks for encashment activity were 23-28 February (600 books), 16-21 February (542 books) and 15-20 June (524 books). The fluctuation in encashment levels indicates a direct relationship to return, with low numbers in winter and highs during the spring and summer travel seasons.

2.4 Encashment locations operating throughout the year included Timergarah, Jamrud, Hangu and Bannu. Chitral operated periodically during the summer. Beginning in May, 4 Afghan staff were hired as Encashment Assistants to ensure the continued operation of the programme without reducing the effectiveness of the territorial field teams or the repatriation monitoring staff. Encashment staff are permanently assigned to a particular location and are provided accommodation in the UNHCR field house.

2.5 Contingency plans have been developed to expand the encashment programme in response to a sudden increase in demand. Additional sites have been identified for operation once the level of encashment exceeds current capabilities; repatriation and territorial staff can be called upon to operate additional locations until temporary staff are hired. Although no increase in locations was found necessary in 1991, these plans remain available for future implementation when the need arises.

2.6 No protection issues were identified during the year related to the encashment programme. Refugees were able to freely approach the locations without interference and there was a marked decline in statements opposing the programme. Increasing openness in the camps allowed discussion of return and assistance available for return (through encashment as well as through the Peace Houses in Afghanistan). As conditions improved, participation of passbook traders at encashment locations was progressively restricted until by year-end it had been completely eliminated.

2.7 The primary problem involved tracking and tracing lost/stolen passbooks reported by refugees and CAR. Effective mechanisms have been established to maintain an updated listing of books which is distributed to all encashment sites. Lost/stolen books, when presented for encashment, are confiscated and returned to the original owner. Although it is a time-consuming and labor-intensive activity, tracking lost/stolen books is believed to be necessary to enhance the credibility of the programme and to prevent abuse.

3. <u>Repatriation Monitoring: Border Crossings</u>

3.1 It is firmly believed that the best means of assessing repatriation would be to maintain a permanent UNHCR presence at the border crossings to count and interview returnees. Contingency plans have been developed for deployment of staff to major crossing points if/when other indicators show a dramatic increase in return movement. Once a continued pattern of movement is verified, temporary staff could be hired to maintain 24-hour coverage at crossing points. The major routes of return have been reviewed and data is currently being collected to analyze the origin and destination for returnees using each crossing.

3.2 Pending full-time UNHCR presence at border crossings, arrangements were made during the year for government officials and the Frontier Corps to maintain registration books to record numbers of individuals (men/women/children), date of crossing, origin in Pakistan and destination in Afghanistan. After reaching agreement with the local political agents, instructions and supplies were given by UNHCR staff to the border guards at the following locations:

District/Agency	Border Point
Chitral	Parabig
	Shah-e-Salim
	Arandu
Bajour	Nawa Pass
	Benshahi Pass
	Ghakhi Pass
Khyber	Torkham
Kurram	Teri Mangal
	Kharlachi
	Khardand
North Waziristan	Sydgi
	Ghulam Khan
South Waziristan	Wana/Zeli

3.3 The arrangements made to register returnees are far from perfect: the border guards lack commitment to registration, their literacy level is low, and despite instructions, there is lack of clarity on how to identify a returning family. The staff are regularly rotated to other assignments and locations which disrupts continuity and consistency. Returnees are identified as full families (with accompanying women and children) with household goods (beds, kitchen utensils, livestock, etc.); therefore, if the returning family is divided or has sold all their household effects, they would appear to be locals and not registered as returnees. In addition, there are major border crossings which do not have any government presence, most significantly in South Waziristan where the border is not clearly defined and security is uncertain.

3.4 During the peak of the repatriation season, UNHCR monitoring staff travelled frequently to border points to record information from the register, interview returning families and provide guidance and assistance to the border guards. They regularly commented on the lack of commitment and the degree to which guards failed to include obvious returnees in the register. The most promising results have been received from Torkham crossing, yet even here it is recognized that many more families are returning than are identified. The totals recorded at the border, therefore, should be viewed as an absolute minimum.

3.5 Registration records at the border began with Torkham on 19 April and expanded to additional borders 1 June. By year-end, 22,613 individuals were identified as returnees, the largest number (65%) being observed at Torkham. The destination for the greatest number of returnees is Nangarhar province. Further details are as follows:

Province	Families	Individuals	% of Total
Nangarhar	1421	13,015	58%
Paktia	475	4,293	19%
Kunar	118	841	4%
Baghlan	95	798	4%
Kunduz	105	791	4%
Logar	51	725	3%
Other	271	2,150	8%

4. Repatriation Monitoring: Village Level Population Surveys

4.1 It was recognized by UNHCR Pakistan that an essential component to monitoring repatriation was an assessment from inside Afghanistan of the degree of return to districts of priority. Information on return could be obtained through cross-border missions, interviews and population surveys. During the first quarter of 1991, a consultant was contracted by UNHCR to develop an approach and reporting format for the systematic collection of data in Afghanistan which would identify the level of permanent return. The approach recommended was to conduct village level surveys based on observation of population indicators (i.e., houses, bazaars, transportation, schools, etc.). Due to the vast scale of surveys which would be required, it was proposed to utilize NGO field staff operating programmes in Afghanistan who could be trained to complete the survey forms on behalf of UNHCR. The consultant prepared a questionnaire and began training sessions for NGO staff on the approach and reporting format.

4.2 Upon completion of the consultancy, the approach was further refined in order to more effectively target the villages for survey. Specific NGOs were identified and their representatives were requested to undertake 3 surveys during the year in 5 villages for each district in which they operate programmes. Agreements were reached with IRC (for Jaji and Ali Khel districts of Paktia), CARE (for Asadabad, Peche and Marawara districts of Kunar), and Swedish Committee Education Department (for Khogiani and Rodat districts of Nangarhar). Training was provided to specific field staff both in Pakistan and on-site in Afghanistan. The villages for survey were identified jointly by UNHCR and the responsible NGO and follow-up missions were made by repatriation staff to the sites in Afghanistan to clarify survey procedures and reinforce the training objectives.

4.3 In total, over 200 NGO staff received 2-3 days of training on the observation survey format and more than 1,000 questionnaires were distributed to agencies for completion. The goals and objectives of the survey were thoroughly explained to NGOs individually as well as at a special meeting of the Repatriation Sub-Committee of ACBAR. SOP received back 42 completed surveys from the NGOs. Villages were only surveyed once during the year and provided no basis for comparison to identify population fluctuations. Most of the forms showed inconsistencies which displayed a lack of understanding in the method-

ology. In general, the efforts to assess repatriation through village level surveys was concluded to be unsuccessful for the following reasons:

4.3.1 the support and cooperation of agency heads in Peshawar was not matched by the commitment of the field staff;

4.3.2 many of the NGO field workers who received training on the survey method had a low level of education and found many of the concepts difficult to grasp;

4.3.3 there are fundamental assumptions in the survey approach and questionnaire which show an absence of understanding of current conditions at the village level in Afghanistan; and,

4.3.4 UNHCR SOP repatriation unit does not have the time which is required for the necessary follow-up and debriefing of surveyors.

4.4 In November, discussions were begun with the Agricultural Survey of Afghanistan (Swedish Committee) regarding a contractual arrangement for village level surveys in districts of priority for repatriation. Their experience with survey techniques and familiarity with the districts to be covered should overcome the difficulties experienced this year and provide UNHCR with useful data on return.

5. Repatriation Monitoring: Refugee Camps in NWFP

5.1 In the past, efforts to identify return through monitoring camp indicators (i.e., schools, houses, BHUs, etc.) have been difficult in NWFP. Some of the reasons include the closed nature of Afghan society, the large number of unregistered refugees available to occupy vacant houses, the practice of leaving family members behind in Pakistan (for education or employment), and the routine migration of refugees to other parts of Pakistan (either to join family members in other camps, seasonal migration or movement to urban areas for employment). Depending on the camp location and the level of services available, it is estimated that between 10-30% of the camp population would have to depart before the movement would be visible.

5.2 During the winter 1990-1991, it was established through house visits by UNHCR field staff and camp security personnel that the majority of encashments had indeed departed the camps. It was, however, not clear whether the families had returned to Afghanistan. Most of the houses had been reoccupied by other families who were unaware of the current location of the previous occupants. Interviews with camp elders and individual refugees indicated an increasing openness to acknowledge that refugees were returning to secure areas of Afghanistan, but many of the departures were identified as unregistered refugees.

5.3 In Summer, 1991, there was increasing evidence of departure out of camps whereby houses were found vacated and roofbeams, doors and window frames had been sold in the local bazaar. In Malakand Agency, 351 houses were found vacated and dismantled by families returning to

Afghanistan. In the two adjoining camps, 687 families (14% of the combined population) had encashed their passbooks during the first year of the programme. Various sample surveys disclosed that 55.87% of the departures had been registered in the camp and encashed their passbook; 67.39% of the families had departed for Afghanistan. The intended destination of the returnees were the provinces of Baghlan, Kunduz, Nangarhar and Kunar.

5.4 Further investigation of other districts in NWFP revealed similar visual evidence of departure. Dismantled houses have been identified in Abbotobad, Mansehra, Bajour, Dir, Kohat and North Waziristan. The degree, however, has not been as dramatic nor have conditions been suitable to conduct similar surveys. The encashment programme provides valuable assistance in identifying camps where departure is taking place and as the level increases, it is likely that further confirmation will become available.

5.5 Meanwhile, interviews with elders, refugees and camp administrators continue to confirm only a small percentage of the actual departure believed to be occurring in NWFP. Although there is increasing openness and recognition of a return movement, there remains concern that a reduction in the camp population will impact a reduction in services and assistance. Departures are most frequently acknowledged for unregistered refugees or due to the reduced level of rations available in camp. After an initial reduction by 20% (from 15kg to 12kg per person), distributions have been irregular with only 8 allocations being made throughout the year, in effect reducing the rations a further 33% (an overall reduction of 47% from 1990 levels).

5.6 In response to comments that departures from camp have been to urban areas of Pakistan, repatriation field staff undertook missions to the urban centres of the Punjab (Rawalpindi, Islamabad and Lahore) to assess the degree of internal migration. Their findings revealed that, although the numbers were greater than previously believed, most families had migrated directly from Afghanistan to Punjab and only a few families had been originally established in the camps of NWFP (and very few indeed had moved from the camps to the cities during the past year).

6. Repatriation Monitoring: Routes of Return

6.1 As evidence of return became increasingly apparent from border crossing information, repatriation staff began monitoring the major roads in NWFP to escort returnees through checkposts in tribal agencies up to the border with Afghanistan. Although some of the families did not feel such assistance was necessary, others gratefully accepted the offer by UNHCR to accompany them to the border and commented that their presence sharply reduced the delays and payments which had been encountered by previous groups. Many of the returnees were understandably reluctant and suspicious of UNHCR approaches; nevertheless, there were occasional opportunities to assist with the return and view it more closely to see what obstacles they would encounter. Only on a few occasions were any hindrances or acts of harassment witnessed by the field monitoring staff.

6.2 On 28 October, UNHCR escorted two trucks carrying 31 families (176 individuals) from Peshawar to the border at Wana (South Waziristan) for onward travel to Kabul and Baghlan (Nahrin district). This was the first organized return in which UNHCR contributed financial assistance for transportation. In prior negotiations with the group elders, it had been agreed that UNHCR would pay the transporter a total of Afs 1.2 million (equivalent to US$ 1,000.00) as partial payment (2/3 of total estimated cost) of return. All families were Tajik, unregistered in Pakistan and returning to Baghlan province via Kabul. The group was observed by UNHCR crossing the border on 30 October and were received by UNHCR in Kabul the evening of 1 November. OCOM Kabul thereupon provided assistance with food support and onward transportation to Baghlan through the Peace House programme. The cooperation went smoothly and will serve as a model for future assistance to returnees destined for the northern provinces who agree to transit through the Peace House in Kabul.

6.3 Chaikhanas and overnight facilities for returnees are being identified by the repatriation monitoring staff. Camping and hotel accommodations are most frequently used in South Waziristan when returnees originate from Peshawar camps and evening travel through tribal agencies is neither possible nor recommended for reasons of security. These locations should provide more reliable statistics on return than has been possible at border crossings in the area.

7. Repatriation Monitoring: Cross Border Activities

7.1 The Afghan repatriation staff made 9 missions to provinces of priority during the year. Two missions were made to Kunar to provide training and follow-up with NGOs conducting the observation survey. Four missions were made to Nangarhar, one for an assessment of return, one for the observation survey and two in conjunction with GTZ and IRC regarding integrated programme planning for Khogiani district. Three missions were made to Paktia, one to assess conditions in Khost, another to assess return to the southern area and to evaluate the completion of a UNHCR project in Paktika, and the third to assess return and evaluate projects in north and central Paktia.

7.2 Due to security concerns and the absence of any indications of return, no mission was made to Logar province. Also due to internal conflicts in the last half of the year, no further missions were undertaken for Kunar province. Arrangements for all missions were made in cooperation with an NGO working in the area which allowed UNHCR staff greater freedom of access and movement.

7.3 As other UN organizations have assumed a greater role in funding rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes in Afghanistan, UNHCR has reduced its level of direct involvement in cross-border projects. During 1991, projects which UNHCR had funded in 1990 were completed and no new projects were funded from SOP. UNDP had previously indicated a willingness to include UNHCR refugee return priorities as a significant criteria for UNDP project identification and fully supports targeting projects to areas of likely returnee impact, especially where some return has already been demonstrated. In a cooperative effort with UNDP and other UN agencies, UNHCR is taking on

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